

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 27, 30-34, 38, 40, 41, 45-56, 59-63, 67, 69, 70, and 74-91 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over French Patent No. 0,384,231 ("FR '231") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,660,656 to Herbelleau et al. and/or U.S. Patent No. 3,072,171 to Drakeford et al. and optionally further in view of at least one of U.S. Patent No. 3,240,250 to Frazier, U.S. Patent No. 4,673,014 to Markow, and U.S. Patent No. 5,529,105 to Hayashi et al.; rejected claims 28, 29, 39, 43, 44, 57, 58, 68, 72, and 73 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FR '231 in view of Herbelleau et al. and/or Drakeford et al., and optionally further in view of Frazier, Markow, and Hayashi et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,826,297 to Alderfer; and objected to claims 42 and 71.

In this Amendment, Applicants propose to amend claims 27 and 56, by incorporating the subject matter of 41 and 42 into claim 27, and the subject matter of claims 70 and 71 into claim 56. Claims 27 and 56 have also been amended to improve clarity. Applicants also propose to cancel claims 41, 42, 70, 71, and 85-91. Before entry of this Amendment, claims 27-91 were pending in this application. After entry of this Amendment, claims 27-40, 43-69, and 72-84 remain pending in the application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 42 and 71.

Applicants respectfully traverse with the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). In order to expedite prosecution of this case, however, Applicants have amended claims 27 and 56 to incorporate subject matter of objected to claims 42 and

71, respectively. Claims 42 and 71, as well as claims 41 and 70, from which claims 42 and 71 respectively depend, have been canceled in order to maintain antecedent basis. Claims 85-91 have also been canceled. Accordingly, each of the above-noted rejections have been rendered moot by Applicants' proposed amendments.

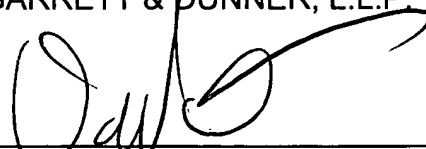
As a result, Applicants' proposed amendments place this case in conditions for allowance, and raise no new issues requiring further consideration or search. Entry of this Amendment After Final and a timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
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